

# *The Character Quarterly*

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McCain Inspires Forrestal Audience.....	2
Are You Willing?.....	3
As American As Apple Pie.....	4
A Tribute to Our Fallen Shipmates in the Attack on America.....	5
Corbin Conference 2001.....	6
Make A Difference Day.....	7
A Nation Unites.....	8

*Civilizations  
should be measured by  
"the degree of diversity  
attained and the degree  
of unity retained."  
W.H. Auden*



## McCain Inspires Forrestal Audience

by Midn 1/C Patrick Murphy

**L**ife in America changed dramatically on Tuesday morning September 11, 2001. All Americans have been affected in one way or another by the tragedies that befell our country that day. At the Naval Academy, heightened security led to the cancellation of September 12th's Forrestal Lecture, which was to be given by U.S. Senator, and 1958 USNA graduate, John McCain. One month later, however, the lecture was rescheduled and Senator McCain gave a modified address relevant to the new world in which we find ourselves.

Senator McCain had originally planned to speak on the recent Quadrennial Defense Review, but instead spoke about current political and military developments, and primarily about values such as dedication, patriotism, and duty. "I thought it more appropriate tonight to speak directly to the midshipmen, and to speak of more enduring

themes than defense modernization... I thought I might share some thoughts about the privilege, the duty and the honor that was once mine, and is now yours," said McCain.

Few in the audience were disappointed with the change, as McCain is one of the more distinguished, and popular, Academy graduates to speak to the Brigade. "I was excited that a distinguished graduate such as Senator

McCain would take the time to impart his knowledge to us at such an important time for our country," said MIDN 1/C Andrew Beard, of 3rd Company. Indeed the events of September, 2001, and America's reaction to them, took center stage.

McCain's address began as that of a politician as he discussed the role our armed forces must take in the changing world environment, and the dedication with which they must be employed. "We must change and change permanently the mindset of terrorists... who believe the terrorist conceit that they will ultimately prevail in a conflict with the West, that America has not the stomach to wage a relentless, long term, and, at times, ruthless war to destroy them."

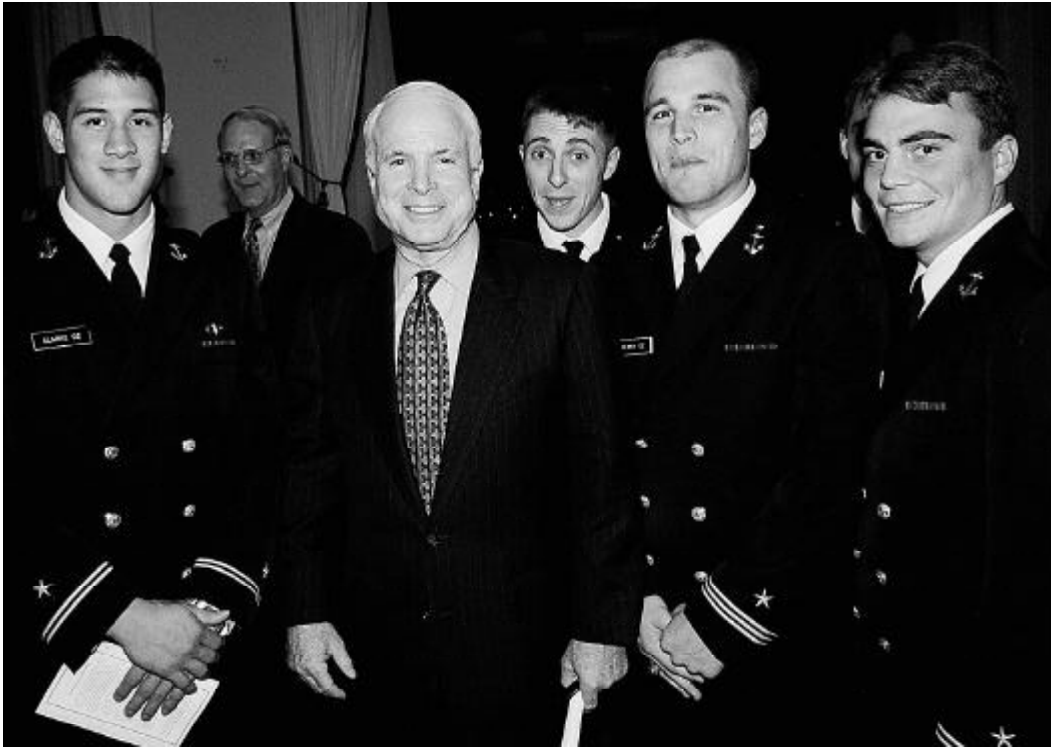
The senator then spoke of responsibility and the costs and rewards

a poor destiny it is that claims no higher cause than wealth and fame."

Senator McCain concluded by reminding the Brigade of their role in these challenging times, "The President and his able cabinet must, and I am confident will, wage this war wisely and decisively. But government is responsible for the summons. It falls to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, it falls to you to give the answer. This is a righteous cause, and there is much honor in your summons, but more honor still in your answer. I have no doubt that you are worthy of it, no doubt at all." This assertion was further clarified: "This war will still be underway, in one form or another, when some of you, perhaps all of you, receive your commissions," he said. A poignant thought for the class of 2002, but also an unforgettable reminder that

while it may be hard to deploy to class while others deploy to war, our time may soon come. By the end of the evening Senator McCain had challenged the audience's dedication, patriotism and sense of responsibility. We had seen the perspective of a dedicated Senator, a Navy veteran, a shipmate who at one time sat in the very seats we filled, and most importantly, a patriotic American. "It is your

duty and your honor to defend the greatest nation in history in its hour of need," said Senator McCain, "I envy you." There is little doubt those who had the privilege to hear the Senator speak are now a little more prepared to fulfill that duty.



of being a citizen of the United States. "We are a free people," he said, "and among those freedoms is the liberty to sacrifice or not for our birthright." To the assembled officers and midshipmen he continued, however, "The richest man or woman, the most successful and celebrated of our citizens possesses nothing important if their lives have no greater object than themselves. They may be masters of their fate, but what

## As American as Apple Pie

by *Midn 1/C Pritha Mahadevan*

Senator McCain spoke to the Brigade of Midshipmen in a recent Forrestal Lecture. As a Naval Academy graduate, fighter pilot, POW, and now senator, McCain provided both insight into our nations' civilian leadership and into our own daily struggles as midshipmen. Of course McCain recounted the storied tales of his own Academy years, offering hope to those in the running for "anchor man" as well as reaffirming the commonality of midshipman life. Senator McCain made many remarks, and one in particular stuck with me. It was more of a fact, really. I had never considered the Senator's point, but as he stated, the mainland of America had not been attacked since the War of 1812. Nearly 200 years had passed between hostile acts actually taking place on the mainland of America.

The recent conflicts have been a world away. The Middle East, Grenada, Somalia, Bosnia are all distant concerns to the day-to-day activities of Americans. The world of Vietnam might as well have been another world all together, Korea is often overlooked as ever even happening, and the great threat of German U-boats never

Pearl Harbor stands out as the assault against America. And yet, even

actually made the east coast of America.

Pearl Harbor stands out as the assault against America. And yet, even though a territorial entity, Hawaii did not even earn statehood until 1959. The Great War, World War I, never came close to our shores. I even considered the Mexican-American War. However, I quickly realized that the aggressive acts of Mexico in Texas happened before Texas earned statehood. So, in fact, Senator McCain was correct in stating the American mainland has not been attacked since the War of 1812 with Britain. No wonder Americans feel secure traveling in the air, playing in the parks, and just living day to day in pursuit of the American dream. We do not live in a land of religious conflict, ethnic hostilities, or aggressive neighboring border countries. For goodness sake, our biggest problem is trying to stop illegal entrance from our neighbors as desperate people to the land of promised prosperity!

A few weeks after the terrorist attacks, I went to a national festival with two other midshipmen. The three of us traveled to a festival located about 10 miles north of Gettysburg, through the scenic backcountry of Pennsylvania and Maryland. The festival was called the "National Apple Harvest Festival", and no kidding, this was an apple festival of national scope. At the festival, there were bushels of apples, and all the apple butter, apple cider, apple pie, apple...well, you get the idea.

As I danced with the tribal Indians, ate apple pie, and listened to a 300-pound man sing the blues about how women love a fat man, I felt this overwhelming urge to grab the terrorists and show them

our real way of life. America is not about corrupt values, commercialism run amuck, and boy bands robbing our precious youth of their innocence. Come on, America is about thousands of families driving hours to a festival, and spending a day with their loved ones just enjoying a beautiful fall day and a piece of pie that costs \$1.25. The whole time I was there, petting baby lambs with three year olds or throwing axes at a tree with the Shakers, I just kept repeating to myself, "I wish I could



show them our way of life, and maybe they would understand...maybe".

Have you felt that way, maybe if "they", the enemy, the monsters, the terrorists, could see us live our moments with the bustle and spirit which defines and sustains America, maybe they would want a taste of our freedom, ingenuity, and perhaps tolerance?



*Americanism  
is a question  
of principles,  
of idealism,  
of character;  
it is not  
a matter of birthplace  
or creed  
or line of descent.  
Theodore Roosevelt*



## Are You Willing?

*by Midn 1/C Abby Stiles*

Who comes to mind when you hear the words honor and courage? Who would you feel most comfortable following into battle? Now picture that person in your mind and think about the qualities they hold which make you admire him/her most. More than likely, as future Naval and Marine Corps officers, you have asked yourselves these questions many times throughout your years at the Naval Academy and chances are, those people you are picturing in your mind have shown exceptional leadership and character by surviving difficult struggles while remaining faithful to their moral principles.

One such person who epitomizes the ideals of character, courage, integrity, and honor was recently honored as one of the Naval Academy's Distinguished Graduates. The Naval Academy Alumni Association awards this honor to graduates who have displayed their dedication to the nation through lasting contributions of public service. Vice Admiral Stockdale '47, USN (ret.) immediately springs to mind when I think of someone who exudes the ideals of character and honor I strive to achieve. His accomplishments throughout his 40-year career of Naval service are filled with examples of his courage and commitment to upholding the highest ideals of honor and character.

Several midshipmen had the honor of meeting with Admiral Stockdale and his wife during the Distinguished Graduate weekend. Over an informal lunch, Admiral and Mrs. Stockdale discussed issues relating to our future as Naval and Marine Corps officers, especially in light of the September 11th tragedy. Although Admiral Stockdale has proven his moral and mental strength and courage, people cannot too easily forget the strength, honor, and courage his wife has shown through her own experiences from forty years of Navy life. Mrs. Stockdale led the discussion by posing several questions about our own futures and the future of the country. She asked us what our plans were after graduation, and what we thought about all that has been happening in our nation as a result of the attacks. She discussed the encouragement she felt from the pride and support Americans have displayed, recalling the severe negativity of the American people during Vietnam, and hoping that the positive sentiment remains even after the first casualties return home. She also described the feelings she experienced while her husband was imprisoned by the Vietcong. She found it extremely challenging to face the difficult times living in an unsupportive society that opposed many ideals of the war effort for which her husband was suffering greatly. Mrs. Stockdale then presented us with a significant question when she turned to us and asked if we were ready to die. Midshipman 1/C Pritha Mahadevan remembers this question

vividly because "it is a question on everyone's mind, yet no one wants to acknowledge it."

I remember four years ago, when I was deciding to apply to the Naval Academy, my parents asked me the same question. "Was I willing to die for this nation and what it stands for?" At the



time, as a senior in high school completely unaware of the organization and ideals of the military, the answer came easily: Of course I would die for the preservation of freedom and liberties I have been granted the privilege of enjoying. After all, the nation would never have to go to war anyway, right??? WRONG. If the past several months have taught us anything, it is the unpredictability of the world, and in this unpredictability, one needs to be able to rely on some certainty. What is more certain than our own beliefs and values to our duty and commitment? Mrs. Stockdale's question comes at a time when this issue has been in the forefront of many midshipmen minds. The events of September 11th bring an entirely new aspect to the significance of what our responsibilities will entail in just a few short months.

Admiral and Mrs. Stockdale never cease to amaze those around them. Throughout all the trials they have endured and the experiences they have shared over Admiral Stockdale's 40-year Naval career, they still know the pertinent issues to address concerning the future of the military. By forcing us to face the ultimate question of military service, they bring to light one of the most essential questions one should ask themselves before entering their years in the Navy or Marine Corps. Admiral Stockdale was willing not only to die for his nation, but also to endure endless torture and hardship. His value of duty, commitment, and loyalty provide an example all of us can and should learn from. So I ask you, "Are you ready to die for your country?"



## A Tribute to Our Fallen Shipmates in the Attack on America

by *Midn 3/C Mande Mure*

They each could swear they had the last real plebe year. They chopped, braced, learned rates, and reported to that always-persistent upperclassman. They walked the halls of Sampson and Seventh-wing and stood at attention in their suffocating full dress blues parade after parade. They once were midshipmen too. The Naval Academy family suffered tragic losses on that fateful day in September. As a result of the "Attack on America," we lost former midshipmen and fine naval officers. Even though we did not lose our own classmates, as the Brigade of Midshipmen, we cannot help but feel linked to the many classes that came before us. A strong connection exists between every man and woman who has walked the halls of Bancroft and proudly wears the midshipmen and officer uniform. This connection with past graduates causes us to mourn respectfully for the loss of our brothers.

Perhaps we feel this bond because our fallen shipmates endured the same trials we now endure. Each survived plebe summer, four "Dark Ages,"

and the forty-year swim. They also enjoyed the same traditions we cherish every year. They danced the night away at the second-class Ring Dance and, of course, rose to reveille at 0630 every morning. All of them ritually threw their covers high in the air on that warm May or June morning of graduation and wore their class rings with great pride.

Unfortunately, a series of tragic events occurred on that fateful day in September. We as a family lost: Charles F. Burlingame, III, class of 1971; Kevin P. Connors, class of 1969; Gerald F. Deconto, class of 1979; Robert H. Dolan, class of 1981; William H. Donovan, Jr., class of 1986; Patrick Dunn, class of 1985; Wilson "Buddy" Flagg, class of 1961; Ken McBrayer, class of 1974; Michael G. McGinty, class of 1981; James M. Panick, class of 1997; Darin H. Pontell, class of 1998; Ronald J. Vauk, class of 1987; Kenneth E. Waldie, class of 1978; and John D. Yamnicky, class of 1952.

In each one of these men, we see resemblances of our classmates and ourselves. One of them wore four stripes firstie year and never once saw an infamous "Form II"; another one was elected class president three years straight. We remember the one who was notorious for showing up to formations in the wrong uniform as well as the one who was always whispering rates to his fellow classmates when they

struggled. They were just like us. One was known for his aerodynamic personality and another was known as an aqua rock. One of them even calculated that we need to run 8.574 mph to pass our PRT. Then there was the one whose favorite pastime was the rack. (And honestly whose isn't?)

Retelling their stories and hearing the accomplishments of these outstanding academy alumni reminds us that while we are here we must continue our mission to become the best naval officers the navy can produce. Great men and women will graduate from the United States Naval Academy in the coming years with the same ideals our predecessors esteemed to acquire. We need to look no further than our own chapel doors to remind ourselves of this mission: non-sibi sed patriae—not for self, but for country. We came here to protect our nation from attacks like the one that took the lives of thousands of Americans and our former midshipmen this past September.

We must remember that they did not die in vain. Each served his country to the best of his ability. Where they once walked, we shall go running. As midshipmen, we are the hope and dreams of the country they loved and served with honor. We shall never forget these fallen shipmates of ours; we will carry on their legacy. They once were midshipmen too.



Burlingame



Connors



Deconto



Dolan



Donovan



Dunn



Flagg



McBrayer



McGinty



Panick



Pontell



Vauk



Waldie



Yamnicky

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## The 2001 Corbin Conference

by *Midn 2/C Ted Vermeychuk*

On October 10th, myself and four other USNA Human Resource Officers (HEROs) departed for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy to attend the Corbin Conference, a three-day-long seminar on gender-related issues in today's U.S. Armed Forces. The Conference was hosted by USMMA, located in Kings Point, NY, on the Northern coast of Long Island and just across the Long Island Sound from New York City. The five federal service academies, the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute each sent a group of representatives to the conference, which provided a broad range of experiences and views on the issues to be discussed.

The Conference was established soon after women were first allowed into the service academies as a forum for discussing the many concerns and issues which arose as the academies began to move towards gender-integration. Today the conference serves as an opportunity for the nation's future military leaders to examine modern issues facing the military services and also to discuss and evaluate the state of gender integration at their own academies.

Margaret Corbin, for whom the conference is named, was born in 1751 and served along with her husband in the American Revolution. She is known for her bravery in aiding in the defense of Fort Washington, New York. While manning a cannon, her husband's partner was killed and so she stepped up to replace him, continuing to fight. When her husband was killed, she continued to load and fire the cannon alone until she was also wounded. She was awarded a pension from the government for her bravery and her memorial in New York City commemorates her as "the first American woman

to take a soldier's part in the War for Liberty".

The theme of this year's conference was "Shades of Grey," designed to focus on gender differences as sources of strength in the military. There were four workshops, each focusing on one of the following topics: current issues and debates on women in the military, leadership development skills for military women, physical fitness standards, and women serving in a theater of operations.

We arrived mid-afternoon on Wednesday, October 10th and after some time to move in with our USMMA hosts, we and the rest of the



participants gathered at the Midshipman Pub for an introduction to the conference and an informal dinner. Thursday morning we broke into groups and began to work on defining the issues within our topic area. After lunch we spent more time selecting our three essential issues and a plan of action before we met by the pier for a trip down Long Island Sound in one of USMMA's training vessels.

Looking towards the area where the World Trade Center towers used to be, the group was quiet as we all took a few moments to reflect. Personally, it meant a lot to see what I had only seen on television until that point. Some of the USMMA midshipman had volunteered as rescue workers in the days following September 11th and had even more poignant stories to share.

That evening there was a for-

mal dinner with keynote speaker Major General Stanley, USMC, who compared his experiences as an African American in the military with those of females in the military. Friday morning each group met to finish any remaining discussion, after which we gathered as a large group and each workshop presented the results of its discussion. Unfortunately, we ran out of time to thoroughly question each group, but several good ideas were presented along with some more controversial ones.

As students and future military leaders, our overall goal was to gain a better understanding of the issues discussed. Among those were the effects of gender integration on unit cohesion, differing leadership styles, equal opportunity versus costs of integration, physical standards, and gender issues at each school represented. We, also, discussed some of the political and economic difficulties involved. Above all, I think we all took away a few ideas for improvements at our respective schools.

The Human Relations Department at USMMA is now working to compile the results of the conference and produce a comprehensive report. This report will then be sent to each academy, and while we as students have no hopes of changing national military policy, we hope that the results of our work will find some practical application in the future at the academies. Of all the schools represented, each group admitted that they had several remaining problems regarding the integration of men and women.

I believe I speak for all of us when I say that I took away as much from simply interacting with representatives from each of the other academies as from my workshop group, and many of the ideas we each took away from the conference will help us in our positions as HEROs. Also, what we learned this year will benefit us next year as we work to prepare and host the Margaret Corbin Seminar at USNA in 2002.



## Make a Difference Day

by Midn 1/C Allison Rogde

On October 27, while most midshipmen headed to town for their normal Saturday liberty, a few hundred others loaded busses and POVs in route to one of nine different community service projects in Annapolis and the surrounding community. Sponsored by the Midshipman Action Group, these projects supported Make a Difference Day, a national day set aside for volunteer community service. From picking and boxing spinach to organizing books, participating midshipmen developed a new perspective on what it means to serve.

This year's Make a Difference Day projects included Gleaning, Project BIG, Salvation Army, Anacosta River, Camp Letts, Woodward Estate Assisted Living Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Sensory Garden, and Project White Hat. Gleaning is a weekly on-going project led by Midn 2/C Nadia Sheikh. For Make a Difference Day she doubled the manpower by organizing a larger group of about seventy midshipmen from 4th Battalion. They bagged and loaded spinach into trucks at a local farm to be transported to food shelters in the area.

Books for International Goodwill (BIG), another on-going MAG project, is organized by Midn 2/C Eric Kommer. This Saturday he took a group of about twenty midshipmen to a warehouse in Crownsville where they organized and boxed books for shipment to many third world countries.

Midn 2/C Nick Keller took eleven mids from 15th company and LT Hernandez, 15th Company Officer, to the Salvation Army post in Eastport where they painted the walls of the gym, entrance hall, equipment room, and two bathrooms. "It's nice to be able to assist a group who does so much for so many," Keller said during the day's work. Captain Paul Egan, the post's executive director, expressed his appreciation of midshipmen's continued support of his organization, "The spirit of these midshipmen is tremendous. Whatever needs to be done, they ac-

complish."

Midn 1/C Jennifer Moore, MAG's environmental officer, led a group of 38 midshipmen from 6th Battalion to the Anacosta River where they planted over 200 trees in order to improve the water quality of the watershed and help prevent future erosion.

Midn 1/C Danielle Fournier, MAG's education officer, took more than half of the midshipmen in 4th Company to YMCA Camp Letts in Edgewater. There, they replaced a stone floor of the stables, mulched around the cabins, and built a canoe rack to store the canoes for winter. "We're having a blast," Midn 3/C Justin Baxter said enthusiastically. Duncan Churches, program director for the camp testified, "Cooperation between YMCA Camp Letts and the Naval Academy volunteers resulted in an improved state of being at our facility." Coast Guard exchange cadet Nick Parker compared this experience to a day of service at the Coast Guard Academy when all of the cadets are given a day off from classes once a year to participate in community service.

The residents of Woodward Estate Assisted Living Center enjoyed visiting with a group of mids led by Midn 2/C Adam Madson as the center celebrated our country in an event they called "Patriotic Day."

As a part of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, mids participate with local children in monthly events coordinated by project leaders Midn 2/C Dave Zane and Midn 1/C George Messner. This month's event coordinated with Make a Difference Day and Halloween as midshipmen "Bigs" met their "Littles" at the Harbor Center in Annapolis for a Halloween Festival. About thirty mids and their "Littles" spent the afternoon stuffing old clothes for scarecrows, painting their faces, and decorating paper pumpkins and bats. Midn 2/C Zane, standing with brothers Tavon and Troy Bynam from Bates middle school, remarked, "These guys must like what we plan for them. They come every time."

Midn 2/C Erin McKenzie led

a trained group of about twenty volunteers to Johns Hopkins Hospital as a part of Project White Hat to continue their weekly work on the various floors of the children's ward.

Midn 1/C Chris Carrizales took a small group from 17th company to a portion of the Baltimore-Annapolis Trail where MAG has recently adopted a flowerbed. They prepared the bed and planted flowers. Midn 2/C Brad Pignatello, 10th company's community service representative, recruited other company mates to join him in weeding, raking, and mulching the American Red Cross's Sensory Garden on Spa Road. "This spot was overgrown and needing attention. The herbs wake up all the senses, and in a half day we can really see the progress which will allow others to enjoy this unique setting," Pignatello said.

It is encouraging to see new groups of midshipman discover the importance and joy of community service. Those who participate in MAG projects regularly know that it starts to become therapeutic, sometimes even addictive, as they realize that what they receive from giving up a few hours on a Saturday morning is actually much more than they could ever really give.



Just a glimpse of the extent to which one's labor impacts a community or organization brings a sense of satisfaction and joy that no personal accomplishment or material possession could ever provide. It's a wonder so many mids keep coming back week after week asking to participate in more community service work! When is the last time you asked?

## A Nation Unites

by *Midn 1/C Andrew Menocal*

America has been in relative peace for the past ten years. The Gulf War was the last major conflict that the United States faced. We have had situations since then, such as operations in Somalia and Kosovo; however, the fact remains that they did not entail the full forces of the military, or the undivided attention of the nation. On September 11, 2001 the idea of relative peace for the United States became a whisper in the wind. Terrorists, that have twisted the peaceful teachings of the Islamic religion into hate, carried out these acts. These attacks were not on our military, but on every citizen who believes in the ideals of the Constitution.

All service academy and ROTC midshipmen/cadets of today joined their respective services when our country did not have a viable threat against it. The Cold War was over with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and our military had settled into the role of a "peace time military". All branches of service struggled to identify themselves with the new role that was put before them. Officers and enlisted personnel were leaving the military for more lucrative jobs in the civilian world because the military was lacking a

higher purpose. The country put its attention towards Monica Lewinsky, interest rates, and baseball player Alex Rodriguez's \$250 million contract. All the while, terrorists lay in the shadows planning and scheming for their time to strike.

Each and every member of the military and government now has a defined enemy and goal: terrorism and the destruction of its source. This is a job that will take years of diplomacy and military action. We will all be challenged to look within and see whom we really are. The day may come when one of us will have to drop a bomb, pull a trigger, or negotiate at a peace table. None of these will be easy undertakings, and they will require us to have steadfast resolve and high moral character. This is a hard time in the history of the United States, and only unity will get us through.

The United States' new war is on terrorism and not the religion or people of Islam. This is a beautiful religion with a magnificent past. We must be careful not to associate terrorism with Islam. These terrorists have no character when they strip a religion and people of the good faith of their beliefs. The easiest way to cope with this new pain and anger is to hate or scorn someone else. We as a nation must be careful to support all of our citizens. This is a time when we must embrace the very essence of what makes our country great: freedom. We have taken this freedom for granted our entire lives. Just

ninety miles from our border communism still plagues the Cuban people, and in Afghanistan, if you do not follow the Taliban you take the chance of being executed. America is great because we allow all our citizens the same rights and equalities.

We should all be proud to call ourselves American because prejudice has not risen in the United States. America has fallen back on its strong character and its beliefs on what is right, and has come together as one. Unity is what the world will see, and that is what the world will join. The fight against terrorism cannot be fought by the United States alone. The world community must come together, and this will only happen if they see an America with unbreakable character, courage, and determination.

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